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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/703,748	11/01/2000	Jeffrey R. Aamodt	06576.105031	2107
25096	7590	01/13/2005		
PERKINS COIE LLP PATENT-SEA P.O. BOX 1247 SEATTLE, WA 98111-1247			EXAMINER BASOM, BLAINE T	
			ART UNIT 2173	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 01/13/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No. 09/703,748	Applicant(s) AAMODT ET AL	
	Examiner Blaine Basom	Art Unit 2173	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the corresponding address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 September 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 19-42 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 19-42 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 01 November 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Response to Arguments***

The Examiner acknowledges the Applicants' cancellation of claims 1-18, and the addition of new claims 19-42. Regarding new claims 19-42, the Applicants note that these claims are directed towards customizing a graphical element representing a task of a project. The Applicants thus conclude that, since the Examiner's previously-cited references are not related to project planning, new claims 19-42 are distinguishable over such art. In response, the Examiner presents the teachings of Harmon (U.S. Patent No. 5,563,994) and Microsoft Project 98 (as described in "Using Microsoft Project 98," by Tim Pyron), which each teach generating graphical representations of project data and thus alone, or if combined with the Examiner's previously-cited references, teach the features of claims 19-42. The Applicants' arguments with respect to claims 19-42 have thus been considered, but are moot in view of the following new grounds of rejection, which are necessitated by the Applicants' amendments.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 29 and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In claim 29, there is no antecedent basis for "the provided project

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data.” As per claim 34, there is no antecedent basis for “the computer-readable medium of claim 22” and “the dialog box.”

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 19-23 and 35-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Microsoft Project 98 (hereafter referred to as “Microsoft Project”), as described by Tim Pyron in the book entitled “Using Microsoft Project 98.” As disclosed by Pyron, Microsoft Project is a computer-implemented project management tool executed to generate and implement a project plan, including a schedule of tasks to be accomplished in a particular sequence (see “Why You Should Use Microsoft Project,” beginning on page 2).

Concerning claims 19-21, Microsoft Project is considered to teach: providing project data for a project, the project data identifying tasks of the project (see, for example, see pages 125-156); displaying a graphical representation of the project data, such as via a Gantt or PERT chart, wherein a task is displayed as a graphical element, namely as a text field, which is displayed in a first format (for example, see pages 50-53; and pages 225-237); receiving from a user a selection of a text field representing a task; displaying options for formatting the selected text field; receiving from the user a selection of a second format for the selected text field; and re-

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displaying the selected text field in the selected second format, whereby the user can customize the display of the graphical representation of project data on a task-by-task basis (see pages 697-701). Microsoft Project is consequently understood to teach a method, like that recited in claims 19-21, which is implemented in a computer system for customizing a graphical representation of project data.

As per claim 22, Pyron discloses that the user's project data may be saved for display at a later time (for example, see pages 91-100). It is consequently understood that the association between the task represented by each text field and its format is saved so that when the graphical representation of the chart is re-displayed, the text field for the task can be displayed in its selected format.

Concerning claim 23, Microsoft Project also provides the ability to format text fields representing tasks according to the category of the task. Project specifically teaches, via a "Text Styles" dialog box: receiving from the user a selection of a category; receiving from the user a selection of a third format; and re-displaying the data fields of the tasks assigned to the selected category in the selected third format (see pages 697-700).

With respect to claims 35-37, Microsoft Project is considered to teach: providing project data for a project, the project data identifying tasks of the project, and where at least some of the tasks are assigned to a category (see, for example, see pages 125-156); displaying a graphical representation of the project data, such as via a Gantt or PERT chart, wherein a task is displayed as a graphical element, namely as a bar in a Gantt chart or as a box in a PERT chart, and wherein the graphical element is displayed in a first format (for example, see pages 50-53; and pages 225-237); receiving from a user a selection of a category of a task; displaying options for formatting

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the Gantt chart bars or PERT chart boxes assigned to the selected category; receiving from the user a selection of a second format; and re-displaying the Gantt chart bars or the PERT chart boxes assigned to the selected category in the selected second format, whereby the user can customize the display of the graphical representation of project data on a category-by-category basis (see “Using the Bar Styles Options” on pages 709-714; and “Using the Box Styles Options” on pages 720-723). A computer executing Microsoft Project is consequently understood to comprise a computer-readable medium, like that recited in claims 35-37, which contains instructions for controlling the computer system to customize a graphical representation of project data.

As per claim 38, Pyron discloses that the user’s project data may be saved for display at a later time (for example, see pages 91-100). It is consequently understood that the association between the selected category and its format is saved so that when the Gantt or PERT chart is re-displayed, the Gantt chart bars or PERT chart boxes for a task assigned to the category are displayed in the second format.

In reference to claim 39, Microsoft Project comprises a “Bar Styles” dialog box and a “Box Styles” dialog box for specifying a style of a bar in a Gantt chart or of a box in a PERT chart, respectively (see pages 709-714 and 720-723). Pyron discloses that Microsoft Project also comprises a separate “Text Styles” dialog box for specifying how data within a graphical element is to be displayed, specifically how the font and size of the data within a Gantt chart bar or PERT chart box is to be displayed (see “Formatting the Text Displays for Categories of Tasks and Resources” on pages 697-700). Consequently, Microsoft Project is considered to teach

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displaying a dialog box for specifying a style of a graphical element, and displaying a separate dialog box for specifying how data within a graphical element is to be displayed.

Regarding claims 40-42; the above-described “Box Styles” dialog box is used to specify the style of a graphical element, namely a box within a PERT chart, as is described above. Additionally, and with specific regard to claims 41-42, Pyron discloses that this dialog box may be used to specify how data within the box is displayed, and in particular, that this dialog box indicates the data variables of the task whose values are to be displayed within the box (see pages 720-723).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 19-22, 26-30, and 33-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,704,028, which is attributed to Schanel et al. (and hereafter referred to as “Schanel”), and also over U.S. Patent No. 5,563,994, which is attributed to Harmon et al. (and hereafter referred to as “Harmon”). In general, Schanel presents a computer application for creating and displaying a flow chart, whereby the chart may comprise one or more graphical elements, each representing a task (see column 1, lines 10-16; column 2, lines 30-47; column 4, lines 4-11; column 13, line 16 – column 14, line 32; and figure 2 of Schanel).

Regarding claims 19-22 and 26-28, Schanel teaches customizing such charts. In particular, Schanel discloses that various buttons and dialogs may be provided to modify a selected graphical element, or the data presented within the selected element (see, for instance, column 6, line 19 – column 7, line 15). For example, and with specific regard to claim 26, Schanel discloses that a “shape properties dialog box” may be provided to specify how the data within a user-selected graphical element is to be displayed (see column 7, lines 7-15). It is understood that this dialog box may display an indication of pre-existing templates, like those recited in claim 27 for the display of data, such templates particularly representing possible locations within the selected graphical element for displaying data (see column 7, lines 7-15, and also column 14, line 57 – column 15, line 9). Additionally, and specifically concerning claim 28, Schanel discloses that another dialog box may be provided to the user to specify the data variables whose values are to be displayed within the selected graphical representation (see column 13, line 16 – column 14, line 56). It is understood that the user may specify such data fields on an element-by-element basis, and consequently on a task-by-task basis (for example in figure 2, the data fields within the graphical element designated by reference number 1 are different from those in the graphical element designated by reference number 289, and whereas there are no data fields within the graphical elements designated by reference numbers 4 and 5). Furthermore, it is understood that this dialog box may also display an indication of pre-existing templates, particularly, pre-existing data fields (see column 13, lines 53-67). Schanel thus teaches customizing a graphical chart of tasks by: receiving a user selection of a graphical element representing a task; displaying options for formatting the selected graphical element; receiving from the user a selection of a second format for the selected graphical element; and re-



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displaying the selected graphical element in the selected second format whereby the user can customize the display of the graphical representation on a task-by-task basis. Concerning claim 22, the user's chart may be saved for display at a later time (for example, see column 16, lines 46-51), and consequently, it is understood that the association between the task represented by each graphical element and its format is saved so that when the graphical representation of the chart is re-displayed, the graphical element for the task can be displayed in its selected format. Although Schanel discloses that the graphical elements of the chart represent tasks, Schanel does not explicitly disclose that the tasks are for a project, as is expressed in the claimed invention. In other words, Schanel does not explicitly teach providing project data for a project, the project data identifying tasks of the project, and displaying a graphical representation of the provided project data, wherein a task is displayed as a graphical element displayed in a first format.

Like Schanel, Harmon presents a system for generating and displaying charts.

Particularly regarding the claimed invention, Harmon discloses that such a system entails a computer display, by which the user provides project data for a project, specifically the tasks of the project and their planned durations (see column 3, lines 40-56). The user then answers various "inquiries" presented by the computer, intended to ascertain the sequential order of the project tasks (for example, see column 1, line 45 – column 67). Once the order is determined, the system may be implemented to generate a desired graphic output, such as a PERT chart or a Gantt chart, like those expressed in claims 20 and 21 (see column 2, lines 29-35; and column 5, line 44 – column 6, line 15). It is noted that the PERT chart is of similar structure to the flow chart of Schanel. Furthermore, Harmon demonstrates that this PERT chart may comprise one or more graphical elements, each representing a task of the project; for example, the tasks in the

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PERT chart of figure 5 are each represented by rectangular shapes. Harmon thus teaches a method, implemented in a computer system, and which comprises providing project data for a project, the project data identifying tasks of the project, and also comprising displaying a graphical representation of the project data, wherein each task is displayed as a graphical element displayed in a first format.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Schanel and Harmon before him at the time the invention was made, to implement the teachings of Schanel to generate and customize a chart like the PERT chart of Harmon, which comprises graphical elements representing tasks of a project. It would have been advantageous to one of ordinary skill to utilize this combination, because systems that can create such charts may enjoy substantial commercial success, as is taught by Harmon (for example, see column 1, lines 15-43).

With respect to claim 29, Harmon teaches displaying a graphical representation of provided project data, wherein a task is displayed as a graphical element within which a set of one or more data variables is displayed. A task is particularly represented as a box within a PERT chart, and variables such as the task name, start times, and end times are displayed in or around the box (see, for example, figure 5, and its corresponding description in column 5, line 44 – column 6, line 12). Schanel further teaches: receiving from a user a selection of one of these boxes representing a task; displaying an indication of data variables of a task; receiving from the user a second set of one or more data variables; and re-displaying the box with the second set of data variables, whereby the user can customize the display of the PERT chart on a task-by-task basis. In particular, Schanel discloses that a dialog box may be provided to the user to specify the data variables whose values are to be displayed within a selected graphical element (see

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column 13, line 16 – column 14, line 56). It is understood that the user may specify such data fields on an element-by-element basis, and consequently on a task-by-task basis (for example in figure 2, the data fields within the graphical element designated by reference number 1 are different from those in the graphical element designated by reference number 289, and whereas there are no data fields within the graphical elements designated by reference numbers 4 and 5). A computer implementing the above-described method of Schanel and Harmon is consequently understood to comprise a computer-readable medium, like that recited in claim 29, which is for controlling the computer system to customize a graphical representation of project data of a project.

Concerning claim 30, it is understood that the user's chart may be saved for display at a later time (for example, see column 16, lines 46-51 of Schanel). It is consequently understood that the association between the task represented by each graphical element and its set of data variables is saved so that when the graphical representation of the chart is re-displayed, the graphical element for each task can be displayed with its specified set of data variables.

Concerning claims 33 and 34, Schanel further discloses that a dialog box may be provided which specifies how data variables within the graphical element are to be displayed, and particularly specifies the names and formats of the fields within the element (see column 13, line 63 – column 14, line 9). This dialog box is also considered to display an indication of pre-existing templates for displaying the data variables. For example, the dialog box comprises a list of pre-existing field formats from which the user may chose (see column 14, lines 20-32).

Claims 23 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the above-described combination of Schanel and Harmon, and also over U.S. Patent No. 5,680,530, which is attributed to Selfridge et al. (and hereafter referred to as "Selfridge"). As described above, Schanel and Harmon teach a method like that recited in claim 19, and a computer-readable medium like that recited in claim 29, wherein the tasks of a project are each represented as a customizable graphical element within a chart displayed to the user. The user may particularly select one of these graphical elements, which is displayed in a first format, and then select one of a plurality of displayed options for formatting the selected element, and wherein response, the selected graphical element is re-displayed in a second format. Neither Harmon nor Schanel, however, explicitly disclose that the user may also customize the graphical elements on a category-by-category basis, as is expressed in claims 31 and 23. In other words, neither Harmon nor Schanel explicitly disclose: receiving from the user a selection of a category; receiving from the user a selection of a third format; and re-displaying the graphical elements of the tasks assigned to the selected category in the selected third format, as is recited in claim 23.

Like Schanel and Harmon, Selfridge presents an application for creating a chart which contains a plurality of nodes and links that cumulatively denote the tasks or features required in implementing a work product (see the abstract). Further like Schanel, Selfridge discloses that the visual aspects of these nodes, and the data contained within each node, may be modified by the user (see column 3, lines 32-38). Selfridge particularly teaches that the visual appearance of these nodes may be based on the data, i.e. attributes, contained within and/or represented by the nodes, and that this mapping between the data and the visual appearance of the nodes may be set by the user (see column 16, lines 36-60). For example, the font or color of the data and nodes

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may be altered according to the data within the node (see column 17, lines 51-53). Figure 9 of Selfridge presents the interface which allows the user to make such modifications to the nodes (see figure 9, in addition to column 16, line 33 – column 18, line 29). The user interface of figure 9 lists various categories of nodes, categorized according to the data presented within and/or associated with each node (see column 17, line 33 – column 18, line 4). Moreover, the user interface of figure 9 displays options for modifying the physical characteristics (such as background color) of particular categories of nodes and displays options for modifying the characteristics of data (such as font color) of particular categories of nodes (see column 17, line 33 – column 18, line 4). When the user is done creating the mappings, the user selects a “write mappings” button, which applies the selected options to the nodes in the network diagram such that the nodes of each category designated with a particular mapping are displayed according to the mapping (see column 18, lines 16-18). Selfridge thus teaches customizing the graphical elements of a chart on a category-by-category basis, specifically by: receiving from the user a selection of a category; receiving from the user a selection of a format; and re-displaying the graphical elements assigned to the selected category in the selected format.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Harmon, Schanel, and Selfridge before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the graphic charts taught by Harmon and Schanel such that they may be customized on a category-by-category basis, as is done by Selfridge and described above. It would have been advantageous to one of ordinary skill to utilize this combination, because the user would thus be able to more efficiently highlight and identify elements and information satisfying user-defined criteria, thus resulting in a more useful and desirable system, as is demonstrated by Selfridge.

Claims 24, 25, and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the above-described combination of Schanel and Harmon, and also over U.S. Patent No. 5,982,383, which is attributed to Kumar et al. (and hereafter referred to as "Kumar"). As described above, Schanel and Harmon teach a method like that recited in claim 19, and a computer-readable medium like that recited in claim 29, wherein the tasks of a project are each represented as a customizable graphical element within a chart displayed to the user. The user is provided with a dialog box for specifying how data within a selected graphical element is to be displayed, as is described above. Additionally, the user is provided with various buttons and menus, separate from this dialog box, which allow the user to specify the style of the selected graphical element (see column 6, line 19 – column 7, line 6 of Schanel). Neither Harmon nor Schanel, however, explicitly teach displaying, within a dialog box, these options to specify the style of a selected graphical element, as is recited in claim 25. Consequently, neither Harmon nor Schanel teach displaying a dialog box for specifying a style of a graphical element and a separate dialog box for specifying how data within a graphical element is to be displayed, as is recited in claims 25 and 32.

Kumar presents a system for creating graphical charts, which may be similar in form to those described by Schanel and Harmon, and which may comprise one or more graphical elements linked together in a network structure (for example, see column 1, line 43 – column 2, line 10; and also figures 8 and 9). Regarding the claimed invention, Kumar teaches providing options for modifying the style of selected ones of these graphical elements, whereby such

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options are presented within a dialog box (for example, see figure 10, in addition to column 14, line 56 – column 15, line 54).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Harmon, Schanel, and Kumar before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the graphic charts taught by Harmon and Schanel such that various options for modifying the style of a selected graphical element may be presented within a dialog box, as is done by Kumar. It would have been advantageous to one of ordinary skill to utilize this combination, because such a dialog box presents an organized means for displaying options of related functionality to the user, as is demonstrated by Kumar.

### ***Conclusion***

**THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

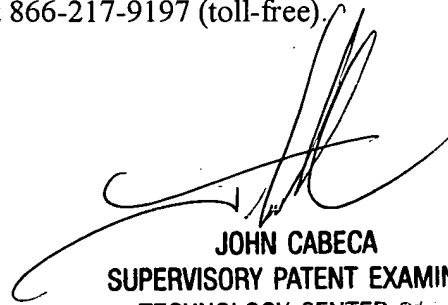
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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Blaine Basom whose telephone number is (571) 272-4044. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Cabeca can be reached on (571) 272-4048. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

btb



**JOHN CABECA**  
**SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER**  
**TECHNOLOGY CENTER**